

ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THOUGHT MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

BERGSONIAN REASON AND THE NEW METAPHYSICS

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### Bergsoncu Akıl ve Yeni Metafizik

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## ABSTRACT

Reason has been the glorified capacity of humankind in history. How it is conceptualized has been a direct influence on epistemology besides other aspects of the human condition. The French philosopher Henri Bergson traces the concept's origins in the field of biology and investigates the concept from an evolutionary perspective. In the end, his works introduces a new form of reason; in addition to the ongoing conception which equates reason to its practical faculty, viz. *intellect*, Bergsonian reason distinguishes itself by its inclusion of the faculty of *intuition*.

This thesis focuses on clarifying Bergsonian reason's evolutionary roots, emphasizing its difference from modern reason which is regarded as a universal a priori. In addition to that, it also reflects on the implications of this new concept of reason in epistemology and gives an answer to the question of if it can be a foundation for a new approach to metaphysics.

A review of the literature has led this study to the result that the Bergsonian understanding of reason directly relates the concept to its evolutionary path; its ontological content and epistemological methods have taken shape according to evolution. As reason is a product of the *élan vital*, it has excelled in the manipulation of matter in life's metaphysical conflict with matter. But this practical excellence has led to a misconception which is the ignorance of the other faculty of reason. Intuition, the faculty of reason which has the capacity to interact with the vital aspects of existence, is required to bring a novel approach to metaphysics.

## ÖZET

Akıl, tarih boyunca insanın yüceltilen yetisi olmuştur. Aklın nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığı, başta epistemoloji olmak üzere, insanlık durumunun tüm veçheleri üzerinde direkt olarak etkilidir. Fransız felsefeci Henri Bergson, akıl kavramının kökenlerini biyoloji sahasında aramış ve kavramı evrimsel bir perspektiften incelemiştir. Çalışmaları sonunda, bize akli yeni bir formda sunar; süregelen ve akli sadece pratik olan entelekte eşitleyen kavrayıştan, Bergsoncu akıl sezgiyi de aklın bir yeteneği olarak dahil ederek kendini farklılaştırır.

Bu tezin odaklandığı nokta Bergsoncu akıl anlayışının evrimsel köklerini açıklamak, bu anlayış ile akli evrensel bir a priori olarak kabul eden modern anlayış arasındaki farkları ortaya koymaktır. Buna ek olarak, bu yeni akıl kavramının epistemolojik yansımaları üzerinde bir değerlendirme yapar ve bu anlayışın metafiziğe yeni bir yaklaşımın zeminini teşkil edip edemeyeceği sorusunu cevaplar.

Araştırmanın sonucunda, ilgili literatürün taranması bizi Bergsoncu akıl anlayışının kavramı direkt olarak evrimsel süreciyle ilişkilendirdiğini göstermiştir; bu anlayışta aklın ontolojik içeriği ve epistemolojik metotları evrim ile şekillenmiştir. Akıl *élan vital*'in bir ürünü olarak, yaşamın madde ile metafizik çatışması sürecinde, pratik saiklerle maddeyi manipüle etmek üzerine bir mükemmeliyet kazanmıştır. Ama bu pratik veçhedeki başarısı, aklın sezgi yeteneğinin yok sayılmasına sebep olmuştur. Varlığın yaşamsal veçheleriyle etkileşebilen yetenek olarak sezgi, metafiziğe yeni bir yaklaşım için gereklidir.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Relation of Theory of Knowledge and Theory of Life

From Henri Bergson's first major work that is *Time and Free Will* (1889) to his last, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932), it can be seen that as a philosopher he was an accomplished follower of the contemporary biological studies of his time. His interest in biology was rooted in his aspiration to recombine the theory of knowledge and the theory of life. As a result, he is regarded as a proponent of *Lebensphilosophie*, which is a school of philosophy that establishes a relationship between studies of life (such as psychology or biology) and philosophy; this school of thought is distinguished by being "a protest in the name of life against modern science."<sup>1</sup>

Bergsonian philosophy is characterized by its "protest" against the modern conceptualization of the human reason and ignoring its implications in metaphysics. Bergson mainly argues that the conceptualization of reason, for example as we observe in Kant, is not a "Copernican Revolution" for philosophy as much as it is an anthropocentric fallacy. For that reason, in his works, widespread ontological and epistemological misconceptions with respect to the concept of reason are underlined; a new portrayal of reason which makes a new approach to metaphysics possible is propounded. In this thesis, I will discuss the evolutionary foundations of the Bergsonian concept of reason, its structure and then I will argue for its methods' necessity relating to human knowledge, especially metaphysics.

In order to make an elaborate inquiry of the Bergsonian reason, one must delve into his studies on the evolution of life. Acclaimed by many as Bergson's magnum opus, *Creative Evolution* is his main philosophical endeavor which he shares his findings on the subject. Bergson regards the epistemological problem of knowledge and the metaphysical problem of life as interrelated. The concept of reason and the history of evolution are inspected simultaneously. He puts forth two arguments in the conclusion: first, that *the intellect* is not an universal a priori capacity, but it has changed in time driven by a specific tendency to fulfill its objective; second, that the concept of reason does not solely consist in *the intellect* (Bergson also uses the term *intelligence* as well as the term intellect for the same faculty; two

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<sup>1</sup> Nitzan Lebovic, "The Beauty and Terror of Lebensphilosophie: Ludwig Klages, Walter Benjamin, and Alfred Baeumler," *South Central Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring 2006): 4



terms will be used interchangeably in this thesis), in addition to that, it has another faculty viz. the *intuition*. As we will see, this metaphysical statement will bring with it epistemologically significant implications.

Bergson's first argument which this thesis will analyze is that the intellect grasps life with certain tendencies, tendencies which took shape in the process of evolution. The evolution of the intellect is related to life; as an appendage of utility, it has become what it is by an uninterrupted adaptation of consciousnesses of living beings that have it, to their conditions of existence.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the intellect ensures the fitting of the body to the material plane; it makes the body able to act in the material plane coherently. Bergson summarizes this by saying that the main function of the intellect is "thinking matter." Inanimate objects, especially solids, are in the epistemological domain of the intellect. "Our logic is, pre-eminently, the logic of solids" says Bergson<sup>2</sup>. This is why human logic triumphs in geometry, it "feels at home," where the relation of unorganized matter<sup>3</sup> and logical thought is most obvious. This argument, that the intellect has a specific purpose, that it has a practical propensity leaves us with the following question: If the intellect has evolved mainly for utilitarian purposes, with the objective to "think" the material aspect of reality, would it be accurate to say that it is an adequate epistemological tool to grasp the whole of reality, to "speculate" on it? As Keith Ansell-Pearson, a Bergson scholar, reminds us "Mind has a natural proclivity to always turn in the direction of materialism."<sup>4</sup> Then what about life, the other aspect of reality?

The practice-oriented perspective of the intellect provides us with a partial understanding of a conceptual framework that is loaded with pre-given concepts which are tools to inspect inert matter. Such a perspectival/relative knowledge of an object can be enough to study and manipulate inert matter, therefore satisfying positive sciences' goals effectively. But the study of life asks for the replacement of the intellect with the other faculty of reason, viz. intuition. Life is a perennial movement, "a flux," and "mechanics" of this movement is temporal and cannot be grasped by the intellect's geometrical and spatialized

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1944), xix.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Unorganized matter is the opposite of organized matter. Organized matter: matter which is infused with life. Michael Vaughan thinks the usage of the term "organization" serves its purpose in a versatile manner; it both implies organization of a living being by its environment in a determinist way, and living being's capacity to organize its environment as an act of creation which establishes the possibility of novelty. This dual aspect of organized matter will be discussed in the section related to metaphysics of life.

<sup>4</sup> Keith Ansell Pearson, "Bergson's Encounter with Biology: Thinking Life," *Angelaki*, Vol. 10, (2005): 1.

schemas of thought<sup>1</sup>; where, being speculative without bearing the burden of practical demands, intuition is fitting for this objective. The interaction of epistemology and metaphysics clearly displays itself in biology; the studies of life investigated with different faculties of reason lead to different theories. In order to provide a better understanding of the intuitive approach, I will also articulate how some intellectualist perspectives (the Darwinian and the Lamarckian theories of evolution) approach to the evolution of life. This attempt will deliver a comparison and show what is lacking in these dominant theories, how the epistemological fallacy of imposing intellectual categories on life and treating it like it has the same qualities with the inert matter make the real dynamics of evolution elude our understanding.

My thesis consists of three chapters;

In the first chapter, I will focus on the metaphysics of life and the concept of evolution. Bergson's critiques on the determinist and teleological accounts of life will be identified and then his own theories about the origins of life and the process of evolution will be discussed. At the end of this chapter, the concept of *élan vital* and the schema behind life's divergence among different forms of consciousness will be seen.

In the second chapter, the concept of reason and especially its faculty of intellect will be the focus. I will discuss the intellect's *modus operandi*, the main objective behind its operation and its epistemological standards of objectivity. Also, its relation with life and its part in societal functioning will be assessed.

In the last chapter, Bergson's alternative to ongoing conceptualization of reason will be introduced, which brings with it the faculty of intuition. The nature of reality, the foundations of metaphysics which demands this introduction will be discussed. Reality's temporal aspect will be distinguished and it will be shown that the differences in the epistemological capacities of the intellect and intuition directly affect the study of metaphysics. In the end, a new approach to metaphysics will be prescribed.

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<sup>1</sup> Pearson, “, Bergson's Encounter with Biology,” 2.

## BIOLOGY AND THE EVOLUTION OF REASON

### 1.1. Darwinian Account of the Evolution of Life

How does life evolve and what are the mechanics of evolution? These questions have to be answered before an inquiry into the origins of reason. Bergson propounds that life is an endless creation. And as he conceptualizes life as an endless creation, he suggests that it is only by way of studying biology's findings that we can comprehend it as such.<sup>1</sup> Hence, empirical study of life holds an essential place in Bergson's philosophy. This is why he examines modern evolutionary theories in the *Creative Evolution*; he tries to provide a grounded perspective to philosophy in its search for the origins of reason.

In Bergson's works, the deterministic and teleological accounts of existence get a critique. These accounts are tainted with the practical habits of the intellect. The intellect's method is analyzing and dividing things and concepts into parts, it works with the motto of "*like produces like*"<sup>2</sup> and therefore "revolts" against the idea of originality. Since, as we have stated, Bergson conceptualizes life as an endless creation and thinks originality as an essential quality of it, this approach poses a problem. As Ansell-Pearson rightly notes, for Bergson, while adaptation "can well explain the sinuosities of the movement of evolution, it is less able to explain its general directions"<sup>3</sup> and therefore Darwinist and Lamarckian theories miss the essential aspect of existence and life in general. In short, creation eludes them.

Contrary to popular conceptualization of the intellect, Bergson considers this faculty and its act of thinking as practical rather than speculative. This is why his metaphysics consider deterministic and teleological (finalist) accounts of life as practical products of intelligence, theories born out of the need to explain rather than to know. "Intellect has been cast in the mold of action," he says, and adds that "speculation is a luxury, while action is a necessity."<sup>4</sup> Therefore the intellect is adept at producing explanations; it extracts repetitions from nature, picks some constant conjunctions apart based on its interests and later imposes the law of causality for producing explanations which can serve as a base for future

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<sup>1</sup> Pearson, "Bergson's Encounter with Biology," 3.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Pearson, "Bergson's Encounter with Biology," 17.

<sup>4</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 50.

predictions and acts. This is what we mean by “the taint,” a bias imposed on reality by the intellect. The repetitive and practical approach of the intellect does not reflect the reality of evolution, its interests simply do not lie there. Whether a deterministic account of evolution, (like in the Darwinian theory of evolution) or a finalist one which makes evolution look like a realization of a pre-given plan (the Lamarckian theory of evolution), classical theories of life are inadequate at explaining the novelty, the creativity that life reveals.

In the general picture, Bergson thinks life as an indivisible process, a force that is moving uninterruptedly. In one of his lessons, he quotes the physiologist Bichat, “It [the life] is the assemblage of the forces that resist death.”<sup>1</sup> Organisms are mediums of this life force, species can be likened to frozen frames of a continuous movie. Only when we step back and reflect on them as a whole, we can realize their interconnectedness. We observe evolution and change in nature and in life, but how does it happen? The analytic mind immediately explains by an attempt to divide what is indivisible; can the new forms of life be a product, a rearrangement of the pre-existing elements? Or do they follow the mathematical necessity of an equation in producing results? If we accept these propositions, then it would not be possible for life to create something new, the results will be a synthesis of pre-existing elements which are “virtually given, being only one of the possible arrangements.”<sup>2</sup> On that presumption, a hypothetical superhuman mind would be able to predict new forms of life, just as it was calculating a complex mathematical equation with enough parameters. Bergson rejects this perspective and opposes determinism and teleology (which he describes as inverted determinism) in the domain of life.

Darwin’s theory of evolution suggests that environmental conditions determine the survival of the species. Infinitesimal changes accumulate over time in an organism and organisms whose mutations correspond to the requirements of environmental conditions survive in the end. Bergson disagrees with this theory. He focuses on the evolution of the eye organ and the function of sight to question the mechanics of this theory. At first, there was only a simple light-sensitive cell, how did it produce the complex function of sight in time? There is also another question to be asked: How is it possible that the evolution produced sight in more than one species, as if life in general wanted to produce this specific function in all of its mediums? Determinist approach to evolution fails to explain the eye organ, its

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson and Michael Vaughan, “The Metaphysics of Life: From ‘Leçons de Psychologie et de Métaphysique’ Given at Clermont-Ferrand,” *SubStance*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Issue. 114, (2007): 26.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 34.

existence cannot be explained in more than one species by such an account. This is so, because the eye is a complex organ consisting of many parts (e.g. cornea, retina, lens) working together to perform a specific function, namely seeing. The essential aspect of the Darwinian theory of insensible variations is that it puts forth the idea that all variations (mutations) happen slowly, in small steps over time. Darwin's theory ensures the preservation of coordination among different parts of the eye (as the supposed mutations are so small that the coordination of parts is not harmed by a radical change) during the mutations; otherwise, these different parts which should necessarily work together would cease to produce the function of sight. But for Bergson, the natural selection would not hang onto small mutations which are "insensible." In other words, evolution would not preserve mutations which would not affect the function of the organ, hence the mutation in question would be lost in a specific individual that it took place in. Then how could it be possible that these infinitesimal changes have been accumulated and passed on to the offspring, let alone manifesting as sight in more than one specimen?

Darwin quite understood this; it is one of the reasons why he regarded variation as insensible. For a difference which arises accidentally at one point of the visual apparatus, if it be very slight, will not hinder the functioning of the organ; and hence this first accidental variation can, in a sense, wait for complementary variations to accumulate and raise vision to a higher degree of perfection. Granted; but while the insensible variation does not hinder the functioning of the eye, neither does it help it, so long as the variations that are complementary do not occur. How, in that case, can the variation be retained by natural selection?<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the idea of deterministic evolution consisting in radical changes poses another problem. Radical changes/variations taking place in the parts of the eye would result in losing the function of sight. Because as we have mentioned, there is a requirement of coordination among all parts, this is necessary for the performance of the organ. "Accidental" leaps/mutations would result in an inability of cooperation among the parts of the eye organ. Thus this variation of the determinist account also fails at explaining the evolution of the eye. Therefore a conclusion is reached. Neither infinitesimal nor radical changes offer an adequate explanation. There are not any pre-established forms imposed by environmental determination, which organized matter (an organism) should necessarily adapt. As Bergson clearly states: "The circumstances are not a mold into which life is inserted and whose life

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 72-73.

adopts: this is indeed to be fooled by a metaphor. There is no form yet, and the life must create a form for itself..."<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2. Finalism and Vital Impetus

Bertrand Russell, while being a philosopher who clearly states his distaste for Bergson's philosophy, nonetheless provides a useful summary of his cosmology;

...the world, for him, is divided into two disparate portions, on the one hand life, on the other matter, or rather that inert something which the intellect views as matter. The whole universe is the clash and conflict of two opposite motions: life, which climbs upward, and matter, which falls downward. Life is one great force, one vast vital impulse, given once for all from the beginning of the world, meeting the resistance of matter, struggling to break a way through matter, learning gradually to use matter by means of organization; divided by the obstacles it encounters into diverging currents, like the wind at the street-corner; partly subdued by matter through the very adaptations which matter forces upon it; yet retaining always its capacity for free activity, struggling always to find new outlets, seeking always for greater liberty of movement amid the opposing walls of matter.<sup>2</sup>

It would be fitting to clarify this image by providing details.

Although Bergson rejects radical finalism as he does determinism, he stands closer to a finalist understanding of life in the end. Evolution-wise, the understanding of the term *adaptation* is ambiguous, he says. What is observed in species, in general, is that an organism's adaptation is more like "utilizing" its environment. Progressively, forms of life utilize their environment more efficiently to their advantage, as having an active role rather than just being passively determined by environmental factors. "It solves a problem,"<sup>3</sup> Bergson comments on the adaptation; thus the active participation of life is articulated.

Similar to radical finalism (which mechanists rightly criticizes for anthropomorphizing evolutionary process and giving it a structure that it does not have) Bergsonian understanding of evolution, established upon the concept of *élan vital*, also finds harmony in the evolution of life. But unlike radical finalism, his concept of evolution lacks perfection; evolution does not carry life towards a pre-determined goal, and it is not "perfect" in the finalist sense of the word. It has a tendency rather than a pre-determined goal; this tendency is common to life in all of its forms and it is characterized by an attempt to flourish and create novelty. This

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Russell, *The History of Western Philosophy*. (New York: Simon Schuster, 1972), 792.

<sup>3</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 79.

tendency of life is confronted by matter and inertia, the opposing force of life and its tendency respectively. Thus, the life's struggle towards a goal becomes differentiated from a perfect journey to an absolute destination which radical finalism claims; it becomes a contingency. As stated in Bergson's words: "Even in its most perfect works, though it seems to have triumphed over external resistances and also over its own, it is at the mercy of the materiality which it has had to assume."<sup>1</sup> This detail which emphasizes the limiting factor established by the life's dialectic with the matter has utmost importance; for when this fact is ignored, a metaphysical confusion might arise from defining life as "that which is not determined by external forces"<sup>2</sup> and *élan vital*, as the underlying metaphysical concept, might be criticized by its inadequacy at explaining reality. Radical finalism bears the mark of anthropomorphization, but "once we acknowledge the tremendous role played by contingency and accidents in evolution it is entirely conceivable that we could have ended in ways that would make us physically and morally different to what, in fact, we are."<sup>3</sup> Evolution does not function like a human construct which has optimal parts pre-arranged to produce the best function. Life has started from the same source, a "common impetus" (*the vital impetus, élan vital*) and it has diverged into different forms in time. Still, these forms have maintained what they had in their common origin, the same vague aim of creating novelty as they were confronted by matter in their paths; "the role of life is to insert some indetermination into matter"<sup>4</sup> as Bergson emphasizes. Whence come the term of "the vital impetus"? Although as all images are static and cannot adequately represent life which is creation, for Bergson, the image of an impetus is the best one that can be borrowed from the physical world for the purposes of explaining the process of evolution of life. As classical accounts of evolution divide continuity that is evolution, this image which symbolizes Bergson's metaphysical theory underlines the essential qualities of life: continuity, interpenetration and indivisibility. Further details will be provided on the life's essential qualities in the following sections, for they are related to the temporal aspect of life and the subject of Bergsonian time will also be expounded there.

What can be said more about the vital impetus beyond its difference from the Darwinian and finalist accounts of the evolution? First, Ansell-Pearson clearly refuses any mystical account of the concept: "If vitalism entails an appeal to some mysterious vital 'stuff'

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Oliver Quick, "Bergson's "Creative Evolution" and the Individual," *Mind*, Vol. 22, No. 86 (1913): 223.

<sup>3</sup> Pearson, "Bergson's Encounter with Biology," 22.

<sup>4</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 140.

that is then held to be the transcendent motor or agent of evolution, then Bergson is no vitalist.”<sup>1</sup> This is an important comment because Bergson has been gradually labeled as an anti-rationalist and a mystic during his lifetime by many. As his focus shifted to ethics and religion in later stages of his life, rumors such as his conversion to Catholicism was a topic of discussion<sup>2</sup> and his philosophy was inaccurately defined as a “revolt against reason” by some colleagues of him.<sup>3</sup>

We have argued that life lacks radical finalism’s perfect plan, but we have also mentioned that it maintains a goal-like common tendency inherited from its original impetus. Once again, the example of the eye organ can be appealed to make this elusive conception clearer. We know that life diverged into different species as evolution progressed. However, there were certain points in this process which different species evolved in the same manner. Bergson compares vertebrates’ and mollusks’ eyes; each of these species produced the eye organ in their own evolutionary paths, but the significance of this common occurrence is that they underwent similar mutations after they had diverged from a proto-form of life. The evolution progressed in such a way that it gives the impression that life acted out with the same interest in both of its mediums even after the mediums had diverged. As a result of this “interest” evolution produced the same result in both of them, which is the utility that is sight.

This phenomenon is the example Bergson employs in *Creative Evolution* to show that life has started from a common origin and a general tendency is inherited from it. Another aspect of *élan vital*, the concept of active participation, is also supported by another empiric example. But before sharing that, Bergson’s own analogy on the *élan vital*, is fitting to be quoted;

When a shell bursts, the particular way it breaks is explained both by the explosive force of the powder it contains and by the resistance of the metal. So of the way life breaks into individuals and species. It depends, we think, on two series of causes: the resistance life meets from inert matter, and the explosive force -due to an unstable balance of tendencies- which life bears within itself.<sup>4</sup>

Let me repeat what the idea of active participation is: it is that life contends against matter in all of its mediums, viz. species, and wrests what it can from matter; thus, it actively participates in the process of evolution. It is clear that a specimen which cannot adapt to its environmental conditions will cease to exist. But there is a difference between saying that the

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<sup>1</sup> Pearson, “, Bergson's Encounter with Biology,” 6.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard Lawlor, “Henri Bergson,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy , accessed December 30, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bergson/>.

<sup>3</sup> Russell, *The History of Western*, 791.

<sup>4</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 109.



environmental conditions are the determining factor, the only reason behind the form of the organism, and it is another thing to say that outer conditions have an impact in the process of evolution. Darwinian theory of evolution exercises a mechanistic reduction and it ignores the initial impetus that continues to be an ongoing determining factor. The dialectical struggle between the vital impetus which is inherent in all life forms and the material/environmental conditions which are imposing themselves on life is evident. As his custom, Bergson appeals to empirical studies of biology to demonstrate his argument and gives a brief example of “certain Foraminifera” and “lingulae.”<sup>1</sup> He argues that they have remained in the same form for so long (since the Silurian epoch and Paleozoic era respectively) that if the sole determining factor of the evolution was adaptation to environment, then the life, in general, would not have created so many different forms; because as these two examples prove, life has achieved that simple task a very long time ago as they have been able to maintain their forms without mutations. Therefore, the vital impetus is not totally dependent on the physical and chemical forces of nature, and what is more, its goal is not limited to survival. Darwinian account of evolution clearly ignores these general tendencies of life. While the inert matter always reacts to outer factors in the same manner, the vital impetus adds indeterminateness to living beings’ responses.

As long as we refuse to acknowledge the contingency in the domain of life, and as long as we refuse this domain’s incoherency to theories which are established upon the interests of the intellect and demands of utility, we are bound to end up struggling. And this struggling would be for explaining life (inefficiently) in intellectual terms, rather than understanding it. Sciences, in operating as they are now, will fail at grasping evolution’s “mechanism,”<sup>2</sup> as well as every other thing that belongs to the domain of life. Bergson says that the philosopher must “allow for accidents,” otherwise “he must regard everything as accidental.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the possibility of novelty should be introduced and it should be realized that there is not a pre-given plan; for a plan reduces many possibilities of future into one specific form, and life cannot be determined in such a way. The set of potential forms of life is infinite, incalculable and unforeseeable. To sum it up, life “is a creation that goes on forever

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 113.

<sup>2</sup> Even this concept of “mechanism” shows the misleading analogy that is imposed to the domain of life

<sup>3</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 116.

in virtue of an initial movement,"<sup>1</sup> which produces forms via the dialectical struggle between indeterminacy of itself and the determinism of matter.

### 1.3. Divergent Lines of the Evolution

The divergence of the original impetus takes place in the course of the evolution and different forms of life erupt through disassociation.<sup>2</sup> For Bergson, although the classification of life into clean-cut categories such as animals and plants is the custom in biology, the approach has its share of problems since certain attributes can be observed in both groups. He suggests that rather than classifying them based on possession of specific and fixed characteristics, groupings must be made according to general tendencies which species tend to follow.

For Bergson, plants are distinguished from animals by tendencies. First, they are self-sufficient in obtaining the necessary nourishment from their environment; they fix the elements from air, earth, water and then utilize them. On the other hand, animals are characterized by their need to obtain nourishment from plants, or from animals which have already provided it from plants. This has an implication; an animal cannot satisfy its needs while being fixed to a point in space, it is not self-sufficient, it needs to be mobile. So the tendency of mobility is the essential characteristic of being an animal, as fixity is the tendency of plants. Bergson admits that there are plants that move to a certain extent, and animals which are generally in a plantlike torpor. But then a point needs to be reiterated: There are not absolute divisions between life forms, but there is a categorization depending on tendencies.

This leads us to the other point, as the distinctive feature of consciousness can only be observed in animal life as well as the attribute of mobility, a link between these two qualities is established. Bergson conceptualizes consciousness as the sum of all possible actions and argues that the cerebral structure/nervous system is in direct interaction with it. While it is wrongly supposed that consciousness depends on the cerebral structure, it is an error. Rather, the evolution of cerebral structure in the "higher animals" gives precision to consciousness, it does not necessarily induce movement but picks one among possible actions. What this means

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Vaughan, "Henri Bergson's 'Creative Evolution'," *SubStance*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Issue 114 (2007): 10.

is, a superior cerebral structure adds voluntary activity to simple instinctive reflexes which is commonly observed in all animal kingdom;

... it would be as absurd to refuse consciousness to an animal because it has no brain as to declare it incapable of nourishing itself because it has no stomach. The truth is that the nervous system arises, like the other systems, from a division of labor. It does not create the function, it only brings it to a higher degree of intensity and precision by giving it the double form of reflex and voluntary activity.<sup>1</sup>

The nervous system and the cerebral structure in it excel at choosing a voluntary action among many possibilities; lack of it would result in instinctive responses and passive representation.<sup>2</sup> In the general picture, it can be concluded that the need of motion for the purposes of nourishment have led animals to evolve with consciousness, and more complex nervous systems have evolved in order to excel at voluntary action.

There are two different kinds of consciousness and they correspond to two divergent lines in the animal kingdom. While insects are the archetypes of instinctive consciousness, vertebrates peak at homo species with the distinguishing mark of the intellect. Bergson argues that there is a misconception about divergent lines of life; it lies within the idea that plants' fixed states, animals' reflexive nature, and humans' rational life are three stages of a single line of evolution; in reality the difference among them is not one of magnitude but a difference of kind: "The cardinal error which, from Aristotle onwards, has vitiated most of the philosophers of nature, is to see in vegetative, instinctive and rational life, three successive stages of one and the same tendency, whereas they are three divergent directions of an activity that has split up as they grew."<sup>3</sup>

As the instinct and the intellect share a common goal<sup>4</sup> and origin but diverged in the process of evolution, they resemble each other. And to some extent, they always include each other. "There is no intelligence in which some traces of instinct are not to be discovered, more especially no instinct that is not surrounded with a fringe of intelligence,"<sup>5</sup> this statement shows us that neither of them can be found in a pure state. Common aspects make these two forms of consciousness mislead people into conceptualizing that the intellect and instinct are

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 122.

<sup>2</sup> An elaborate inquiry into Bergson's position on body-mind dualism can be found in his book, the *Matter and Memory*

<sup>3</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 149.

<sup>4</sup> This goal is satisfying practical demands of life, mainly by initiating movement. This topic be investigated in detail in the following section.

<sup>5</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 150.

two different levels of the same faculty. In reality, the case is that they have complementary qualities as a result of their common origin.

## BERGSONIAN REASON AND ITS EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

### 2.1. Two Faculties of the Reason: The Intellect & The Instinct

Life is characterized by its dialectic with the matter. And these two forms of consciousness, viz. the intellect and instinct are two different methods or tools that have evolved to interact with inert matter. And what is the distinguishing mark between the instinct and the intellect? Although neither can be found in a pure state, therefore display some resemblances; the intellect mainly proceeds by “manufacturing tools.” Human, the animal with the highest level of intellect (because although generally under proportioned to instinct, Bergson argues that different levels of intelligence can be observed among animals too) is distinguished by its capacity of invention and fabrication;

If we could rid ourselves of all pride, if, to define our species, we kept strictly to what the historic and prehistoric periods show us to be the constant characteristic of man and of intelligence, we should say not *Homo Sapiens*, but *Homo Faber*. In short, intelligence, considered in what seems to be its original feature, is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially tools to make tools, and of indefinitely varying the manufacture.<sup>1</sup>

From the beginning of the history of humankind, the act of inventing has been an essential function of our species. The categorical attempts to produce utilitarian constructs have been how humankind interacted with nature; even its social life, its internal relations are arranged according to this tendency. Being the epitome of an intelligent animal, humankind lacks what other animals have to survive, which is adequate levels of instinct. At this point, once again we have to remind that both intelligence and instinct are different types of consciousness. And as they are different, they provide different methods to different forms of life which have them. But nonetheless, it is for the same purpose: Interacting with matter and providing advantage from it. Bergson summarizes this point as: “... instinct and intelligence, therefore, represent two divergent solutions, equally fitting, of one and the same problem.”<sup>2</sup>

We have said that the intellect is characterized by invention and fabrication. But then what about the other form, the instinct? Surely, it is also a method of life; it shares the purpose of making life possible to interact with the matter too. But while the intelligence is characterized by its tendency to produce tools, to deal with nature indirectly via these tools;

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 153-154.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 158.

instinct, as it can be observed in insects in its most clear form, is a direct way to deal with nature. Evolution endowed insects with the capacity to survive and to flourish without a constant need to manufacture tools, as they have an ingrained “pre-given rulebook” in their consciousness. It has necessarily a narrower scope than intelligence. An instinctive consciousness is not teeming with innumerable possibilities that the intellect provides, but in its narrow scope it has a prescribed mode of action, an at-hand solution to a specific problem.

As it has been mentioned, consciousness represents the set of possible actions that a living being can choose from, and an action that takes place is the actualization of one of these possibilities. Therefore it is inferred that instinct tends toward unconsciousness (or deficit of consciousness) with its narrow scope, while intelligence tends towards an intense consciousness, as it represents many possibilities to choose among. The state of deliberation is an ideal example; when a person is before many possibilities, in the moment of representation just before the action, his/her consciousness is intense. In conclusion, “the consciousness of a living being may be defined as an arithmetical difference between potential and real activity. It measures the interval between representation and action.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2. Practical Relativity of the Intellect

Metaphysically, we can divide an object of knowledge into the matter and its form. This also leads to an epistemological division. The matter can be defined as the thing perceived in its essential state, while its form is matter’s relation to another object. Establishing synthetic relations for practical purposes is what intelligence does; it creates formal knowledge of matter based on practical needs. If we analyze the structure of a formal knowledge intelligence “fabricates,” we can realize this process. The deductive reasoning delivers a good example: Intelligence handles its operation by relating two premises to infer a conclusion; in terms of what is already known, what is unknown is reached. In conclusion, it is not possible to know the matter of object by intelligence, but the matter in relation to its mode of operation.

The faculty of instinct, which does not tarry in relational aspects of the object, creates “this is” clauses because the knowledge it provides is about the matter of knowledge;

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 160.

conversely the intelligence creates “if this is” clauses, as it is relational to something else. For example, bees nourish themselves by gathering resources from flowers, this innate knowledge perfectly satisfies the condition of survival in bees and generates the necessary action. It is common to whole species and does not vary from situation to situation. On the other hand, the creature endowed with the intellect, namely human, does not inherently know how to nourish itself. Humans do not have a pre-given action or an instinctive reflex, but they are able to relate the utilization of herbs to their nourishment along with many other resources whether the attempt ends in success or failure. The intelligence just provides a framework without matter, therefore any matter can be put inside it according to the needs. To express the situation in Kantian terms, we can say that the instinct provides categorical propositions and the intelligence provides hypothetical propositions.

When such a statement is made, it might be thought that instinct is the superior of the two faculties. But Bergson clarifies his position on the case by stating that although the knowledge that instinct provides seems better at first, as its scope of knowledge is focused to one specific thing and it is essential, the practical aspect of it becomes very limited; thus instinct is not the superior of the intelligence. Whereas instinct has a perfected but limited scope, the intelligence provides innumerable relative possibilities. We can clarify the situation with another example from nature: In some forms of life, interacting with wood is limited to the purpose of creating shelter; whereas in humans the interaction goes beyond this rudimentary purpose. This stretch of possible actions are caused by the intelligence, and this is how human actions can turn into acts of creation – even into art. Thus, it is obvious that relative knowledge can be established among many different things, and in turn it can be applied to many different objects. The flexibility of the intellect and a wider range of application mean that it is much more suited to practical needs.

The real problem arises when we treat intelligence as a purely speculative faculty. By ignoring its history of evolution and the fact that it has evolved for practical purposes, we actually ignore what is essential about it. Such a deceptive conceptualization of the intellect misleads us also by taking its evolutionary path and its adaptations out of the picture, and then it makes one fallaciously think that the intelligence has always been as it is now, since the beginning of time. This is accepting the intellect as a universal a priori; and the mistake made by this is substantial. It is a “Kantian fallacy” for Bergson, a limitation of the scope and the possibility of knowledge for the sake of making the intellect absolute. And Bergson’s comment on this topic is so important that it is fitting to take the whole passage in full;

We are then reduced to taking the general frames of the understanding for something absolute, irreducible and inexplicable. The understanding must have fallen from heaven with its form, as each of us is born with his face. This form may be defined, of course, but that is all; there is no asking why it is what it is rather than anything else. Thus, it will be said that the function of the intellect is essentially unification, that the common object of all its operations is to introduce a certain unity into the diversity of phenomena, and so forth. But, in the first place, "unification" is a vague term, less clear than "relation" or even "thought", and says nothing more. And, moreover, it might be asked if the function of intelligence is not to divide even more than to unite. Finally, if the intellect proceeds as it does because it wishes to unite, and if it seeks unification simply because it has need of unifying, the whole of our knowledge becomes relative to certain requirements of the mind that probably might have been entirely different from what they are: for an intellect differently shaped, knowledge would have been different.<sup>1</sup>

Then it is wrong to make the Kantian reason (as it consists in the intellect) absolute, to make it the source of all possible knowledge and then appraise knowledge relative to it. As we said, Kantian epistemology makes a compromise on its claims of knowledge, it makes the nature of the knowledge relative in order to make the reason absolute. In contrast, Bergson clearly attempts to restore the possibility of absolute knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

How does making the intellect absolute and, by this operation, compromising on the claims of knowledge affect epistemology? First, by now we know that the intellect is practical and inert matter is its main object. Its method is a result of the evolution as we have explained in the previous sections. Because of this, whatever the intellect treats (concepts included), it necessarily treats as inert matter. Bergson claims, as the intellect seeks utility, it perceives the material world as "parts external to parts," that its perspective is characterized by analysis or by division. Russell also provides an interesting analogy to explain Bergson's point of view on this; "The intellect may be compared to a carver, but it has the peculiarity of imagining that the chicken always was the separate pieces into which the carving-knife divides it."<sup>3</sup> In the end, if the reason is reduced to the intellect, then we are left with no other faculty for our speculative efforts; metaphysics becomes irrelevant and inefficient via the intellect's categorical forms. The discussion of metaphysical implications of this operation will be developed in the following sections.

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 168.

<sup>2</sup> Pearson, "Bergson's Encounter with Biology," 11.

<sup>3</sup> Russell, *The History of Western*, 794.



### 2.3. The Intellect and its Societal Function

Practical demands of the intellect are a fundamental motivation in constructing tools. Where the intellect operates, the imposition of its method and the effects of its demands can be observed. Two of the ideal examples for investigating these effects will be societal functioning and employment of language.

For Bergson, humans are social by nature. But contrary to insects (which are the epitome of the faculty of instinct), humankind does not have a predetermined division of labor or necessarily fixed social roles among itself; as Michael Vaughan notes in a different way, "society is necessary, but the form it takes is contingent upon the history of free individual actions."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in order to communicate and make social action possible like it is in some other species, humankind produced one of its most magnificent tools, viz. language, via the faculty of intellect. Again, we should make a distinction: the act of conversing is not a contingent skill, so is the requirement of a language, these are results of a natural tendency of humans. However, words which make up the language and make conversation possible are fabricated arbitrarily. They are formal entities with the function of having different objects as their matter.

Words, being contingent tools of the intellect, can be prolonged to any numbers of things. As we will show, this act of prolongation also includes abstract ideas besides extended objects; when it comes to words, "anything can designate anything."<sup>2</sup> Verbal entities are practical forms which are created to be filled with matter; first, they were meant to signify solid objects, but then, they have also ended up signifying abstract ideas in daily life for their convenience. Thus, unconsciously, spatial qualities which words have brought from their initial objects have been introduced also into unextended objects. What are the qualities of space? It is discontinuous, characterized by the externality of its parts to each other. In Bergson's words;

...the word, by covering up this object, again converts it into a thing. So intelligence, even when it no longer operates upon its own object, follows habits it has contracted in that operation: it applies forms that are indeed those of unorganized matter. It is made for this kind of work. With this kind of work alone is it fully satisfied. And that is what intelligence expresses by saying that thus only it arrives at *distinctness* and *clearness*.

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<sup>1</sup> Vaughan, "Henri Bergson's 'Creative Evolution'," 18.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 174.

It must, therefore, in order to think itself clearly and distinctly, perceive itself under the form of discontinuity. Concepts, in fact, are outside each other, like objects in space; and they have the same stability as such objects, on which they have been modeled.<sup>1</sup>

Verbalization unconsciously becomes an imposition of intellectual forms. Bergson uses the terms *clear* and *distinct* on purpose, drawing an analogy with Cartesian space, as they are also qualities in Rene Descartes' definition of ideal knowledge. Language's progenitor, the intellect, can only process what is discontinuous and geometrical. This is why it can do nothing but translate everything into static symbols. It is also why the intellect excels both in geometry and in logic; geometry studies the relationship of bodies external to each other and logic studies the interaction of concepts which the intellect rendered their form based on external bodies. "A geometry of words" is created, one might say.

But when words are extended to the studies of life; these studies' objects are turned into distorted translations. What is temporal cannot be studied through spatialization, what is dynamic cannot be studied in terms of fixity. The study of psychology is an ideal example. We will elaborate conscious states and what their temporal qualities make of them in the part named *The Time, Creation and Contingency*; but giving a brief insight into psychology's relation with language in this section will be acceptable. As the psychology's object "the self" is durational rather than spatial, a flux, words are inept at expressing it in its essence. Analyzing the self by representing it in words is riveting it to concepts, necessarily analyzing it into conscious states. Trying to constitute it as a sum of static definitions, meanings attached to concepts, while neglecting its dynamic and unique aspect provides us with the *social self*. This is unavoidable when the self is constrained to the existing concepts of the society. However, the *real self*, which is the core of personality, can only be expressed via actions and inventing new concepts which recognize uniqueness of a self.

Forgetting the fact that words are practical fabrications of the intellect, and by this fault unconsciously infusing concepts with spatial qualities, we do nothing but warrant our metaphysical studies to go astray. If studying the whole of reality is the goal sought by metaphysics, origins and practices of language must always be taken into account. As they are products designed to signify solids which are characterized by their fixity, extending pre-existing verbal entities beyond their material domain and into the metaphysics of life (where the continuity and interpenetration has a dominating presence against discontinuity and

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 176-177.

externality) becomes a detrimental habit of the intellect and a disrupting handicap for metaphysics.

#### 2.4. Instinct and Life as an Object of Knowledge

When the intellect leaves its domain of knowledge, inert matter, and tries to take life as an object of knowledge, its mechanism of forming discontinuities out of its objects misleads it. As the title of Henri Bergson's magnum opus suggests, life is a *creative evolution*, and the evolution is pure dynamism; it is an indivisible continuity rather than an artificial sum of discontinuities. The analytic approach of the intellect divides *becoming* into partial aspects, or into different series of static *beings*, which is the only way possible for it to comprehend them. Therefore analytic approach is also unable to grasp the creation, e.g. what is new. As the intellect provides formal knowledge based on its practical interest, it tries to reconstitute its object from parts which are already known to it. It has a rule ingrained in its *modus operandi*: "like produces like." As it synthesizes known antecedents to produce foreseeable results, meanwhile disregarding an object as what it is in favor of how it can use it, the object becomes just a substitute representation of what it is for the intellect. This proves that while it is the faculty perfected in dealing with what is static, viz. inert matter, it is totally inept at dealing with life. In its simplest expression, as Bergson states "The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life."<sup>1</sup>

Instinct which is the other tool of life and which is dominant in animals, especially in insects, has evolved adapted to this task. It is the organic extension of the reason, and it operates in contrast to the mechanistic method of the intellect. In other words, whereas the intellect is the faculty which has been formed and fitted to study inorganic matter, the instinct has evolved for grasping vital processes inherent in life. For Bergson, while the intellect's approach is like trying to see an object from a partial and outer perspective, instinct grasps the object "from within," it "leads to inwardness of life." Thus, it enables an insight into the whole object of knowledge. It has an understanding of solely, but exactly, what is asked of it: designated tasks which it has specifically evolved for.

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 182.

As the faculty of instinct resides in the epistemological domain of life, it is unfitting to be defined adequately in intellectualist terms: "That which is instinctive in instinct cannot be expressed in terms of intelligence, nor, consequently, can it be analyzed,"<sup>1</sup> hence the faculty of instinct is a bit vague to articulate. Bergson says that it must be "felt" rather than thought, and this is also why it is impervious to science's analytical perspective. Forcing to subsume it to an intellectual scrutiny is actually just going back to the Aristotelian understanding of life, which suggests that life is a unilinear progress which has culminated in human beings and their distinguishing faculty of highly developed intellect. Such an understanding, without doubt, underrates the instinct; it makes intellect the superior faculty of the two. It leads us to a wrong logical conclusion and into thinking that as the higher faculty, the intellect can grasp what the inferior faculty of instinct is. Is it possible that this entrenched anthropomorphic perspective of ours is linked to our glorification of the intellect's capacity and our repulsion to the idea that some aspects of existence are not within our grasp? One can speculate. But when we give a chance to the idea that life has not evolved in a unilinear fashion but has done so in diverging tendencies, it can be realized that the intellect is not a higher form of reason than instinct but a result of a different path in evolution.

This brings a question to mind: If the situation is so, is there any use to talk about the faculty of instinct when we cannot translate it into intellectualist terms? Bergson is positive in his answer, and as it can be seen in his later works which shift the focus to ethical aspects of his philosophy (like *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, being his major work on ethics), the concept of instinct and intuition take pivotal roles for him;

Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations—just as intelligence, developed and disciplined, guides us into matter. For —we cannot too often repeat it— intelligence and instinct are turned in opposite directions, the former toward inert matter, the latter toward life. Intelligence, by means of science, which is its work, will deliver up to us more and more completely the secret of physical operations; of life it brings us, a translation in terms of inertia. It goes all round life, taking from outside the greatest possible number of views of it, drawing it into itself instead of entering into it. But it is to the very inwardness of life that *intuition* leads us —by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely.<sup>2</sup>

The reflective aspect in the intuition is the quality that separates it from instinct. For Bergson, the intuition is an upgrade of the instinct which erupts from instinct's interaction with the reflective nature of intelligence. As the intuition is complementary of the intellect, it shows to the intellect that life does not fall into its *categories of understanding*. Be it causality, unity or

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 185.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 194.

plurality, these concepts of the intellect lack what is necessary; as life is an uninterrupted continuum, only the intuition is fit to grasp life and its qualities properly. However, there is an important point that needs to be emphasized; intuition interacts with the intellect, it is only by way of this reflection that intuition becomes available for the purpose of studying life, or the right faculty for metaphysics. Otherwise, the intuition would be riveted to a specific function, a practical interest and it would be constrained to a flicker of consciousness that exposes itself e.g. in the locomotion of an animal, remaining solely instinctive and unable to be speculative.

## 2.5. The Transcendental Mechanisms of the Intellect and the Possibility of Absolute Knowledge

The essential point we have been trying to emphasize is that rather than being a speculative faculty as it is commonly thought, the intellect is actually a practical faculty. Hence, in order to satisfy its practical demands, it imposes certain forms to its object of knowledge. As action takes place in space, space is one such form. With practical forms imposed, the objects are altered: e.g. time is reduced into space, the movement is frozen into frames, and what is dynamic gets fixed. But there is an essential detail which makes Bergson's perspective novel; that he suggests the genesis of matter as we perceive it and the genesis of intellect influenced each other reciprocally. He clearly acknowledges that the argument "Intellectuality and materiality have been constituted, in detail, by reciprocal adaptation"<sup>1</sup> is a bold metaphysical claim to make, and it begs thinking beyond "traditional metaphysics." Nonetheless, he insists that as the mind formed itself into a framework which consists of distinct concepts during its evolution, it also formed space as static objects external to each other, externalization being the common element in both of these situations. As the critique of Kantian epistemology, taking space as an a priori form of sensible intuition makes metaphysics overlook the genesis of the intellect and ignore the relation between the intellectuality and materiality. Spatial representation of human intellect is not a universal a priori but an a priori form imposed on objects which is a result of an evolutionary process.

Acknowledging the faculty of intellect as an absolute, as a faculty that has remained unchanged since the beginning of the first sparks of consciousness, is the hidden postulate

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 205.

which creates some of the classic problems of philosophy. This postulate constitutes a major point which radically differentiates Bergson from Immanuel Kant. When Kant (whom it would not be inaccurate to name as Bergson's main philosophical adversary) analyzes the transcendental mechanisms of experience, as he does in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he separates existence into two, viz. *noumena* and *phenomena*. Bergson agrees with Kant to a certain point; he also embraces the idea that the intellect proactively participates in the determination of human experience. According to Kant, the intellect seeks unity in nature, in order to form knowledge, it imposes a sensible form on its object such as space, and in addition to that the categories of understanding;

I call that in the appearance which corresponds to sensation is matter, but that which allows the manifold of appearance to be intuited as ordered in certain relations I call the form of experience. Since that within which the sensations can alone be ordered and placed in a certain form cannot itself be in turn sensation, the matter of all appearance is only given to us a posteriori, but its form must all lie ready for it in the mind a priori, and can therefore be considered separately from all sensation.<sup>1</sup>

Bergson would gladly agree with Kant to a much higher degree if the latter chose a different title for his book such as "The Critique of the Intellect." This is one of the points where he opposes Kant; he emphasizes the effects of evolution/time on the intellect, how it has adapted in time according to specific needs. But besides that, he clearly acknowledges the transcendental mechanisms of the intellect.

For Bergson, the Kantian epistemology necessarily represents nature formally and geometrically. As the intellect's domain is space, it can only process data as things rather than fluxes, static forms external to each other. This is the "intellectualization" of reality. And while we have admitted that Kant's transcendental idealism draws attention to some significant and accurate points in the mechanism of the intellect, overall it does more harm than good by postulating the impossibility of absolute knowledge; it turns a blind eye to any other epistemological possibilities. Philosophy makes this poignant mistake in majority of its history when it limits the possibility of knowledge by the scope of the faculty of intellect. Thus, knowledge becomes relative to transcendental mechanisms of the intellect and the opportunity to attain absolute knowledge is lost for good.

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<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155-156.

Kant regards space as an a priori form of intuition<sup>1</sup>. Since space is a priori in his epistemology, questions of how it came to be, or why it is represented by the faculty of intellect as it is and not in any other way are futile questions. In transcendental idealism, a world of *things in themselves* exists as the source of phenomena. Noumena are beyond our cognition, as something can only become an object of knowledge after the spatial form is imposed on it (along with the categories of understanding). But even when we suppose that the Kantian conception is true, still, one idea that we can put forth about noumena remains: it is that there is a “pre-established harmony,” a possibility of interaction between noumena and the faculty of intellect which makes it possible to have phenomena.

“Matter tends naturally toward homogeneous space and necessary determination, just as the intellect left to itself tends towards geometry,”<sup>2</sup> this is how Strange summarizes Bergson’s thought. But this statement does not cover all angles of the case; what we mean by the harmony between inert matter and the intellect consists of reciprocally accentuating each other’s spatial tendencies. In other words, the spatiality of things and space of our geometry (or we can also define it as the form imposing mechanism of the intellect) are in conformity with each other, it is true, but there is something more to this relation. Bergson argues that matter already extends itself in space, but as the intellect is inherently spatializing, it amplifies this specific character of matter during its representation. This amplification results in pushing each other’s spatial characteristics towards their utmost limit, towards a pure externality in space, which, in reality, is not a quality of even matter<sup>3</sup>. Being pure space is distinguished from having spatial characteristics; as we have seen many times, Bergson is a proponent of a philosophy of becoming rather than being, and also his philosophy is one which emphasizes tendencies rather than clean-cut qualities. The spatial determinations of objects are not made exclusively by the mind as it is propounded in idealism, nor that the representations of objects are posited unto us as it is propounded in positivism; but “that intellect and matter have progressively adapted themselves one to the other in order to attain at last a common form.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Intuition is a concept which has been used for signifying diverse things in the history of philosophy. We will elaborate the Bergsonian concept of intuition and its difference from other philosophers’ accounts in the following chapters. But for now, as we have mentioned Kant, let us briefly remind that Kantian intuition is an essential condition of the epistemological process leading to knowledge; it is distinguished by being a sensual receptivity, an immediate representation; whereas Bergsonian intuition is an epistemological faculty of reason. Therefore, the difference between meanings should be underlined.

<sup>2</sup> E.H. Strange, “Bergson’s Theory of Intuition,” *The Monist*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1915): 467.

<sup>3</sup> Pure externality implies a total isolation of the object. We know that from celestial bodies to the smallest objects of quantum mechanics, interaction between matter is everywhere, thus pure externality is an abstract concept.

<sup>4</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 225.

Hence, we repeat the conclusion: The so-called harmony in question has been created reciprocally.

The order we seek in nature via sciences actually imposes itself on nature, and the intellect is partly responsible for this<sup>1</sup>. As the intellect delves into the matter with an increasing intensity, it takes spatial relations which it already has a tendency to see in its objects, to their extremity. When these spatial relations are imposed on objects, nature starts to resemble a pure geometrical plane, hence mathematical operations can describe it precisely. In truth, what happens is that the order is being “invented” mutually by the matter and the intellect, rather than the intellect discovering something inherent in nature. This harmony between matter and the intellect is the reason behind why science works so accurately when its object is inert matter; the reciprocity necessarily arranges reality into a form that satisfies scientific/practical pursuit. As the relations between tendencies of matter and laws of thought go hand in hand, sooner or later they will always ensure the scientific inquiry’s capacity to give explanations. Considering this, will the intellect and its never-ending scientific endeavor ever be able to reduce matter into an equation, and establish geometrical perfection in their work in the end? For Bergson, the answer is a disappointing no. Although matter tends towards spatiality, it is not pure homogeneous space as the intellect likes to treat it; matter is also partly in time. Therefore, mathematics and the positive sciences which erupt upon it will continue to introduce explanations ever increasingly complex and practical about the matter, but “the theory of everything” will be out of their reach as they start from a tacit and faulty presupposition.

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the etymological root of the word *positivism* goes back to Latin *ponere*, which means “put, place”



## INTUITION AND THE NEW METAPHYSICS

### 3.1. Two Kinds of Order and Fundamental Problems of Metaphysics

We have tried to show why and how the intellect imposes its forms on nature, and in this process, how it misleads us into thinking that there is an inherent mathematical order in nature. This “interested” perspective introduces to metaphysics its share of problems. When we accept the idea that nature can be reduced into mathematical formulations, this idea brings with itself an implication, and this implication does not correspond to reality: That nature would reveal itself as a whole and ordered via intellectual scrutiny.

The concept of “order” is an ambiguous one and it is often used in daily life as well as in metaphysical studies. Reiterated many times, the intellect and its paramount practice viz. science, have interests; as the science is in search of practical knowledge, it proceeds by processing specific variables it has chosen. When the practical utility is the goal science seeks, its definition of order inescapably becomes dependent on this goal. What is “ordered” is what science can use, what is “disordered” is actually an interest sought by it, yet left unsatisfied. This expectation based on specific interests is the real determining criteria of what defines what is ordered and what is not in a scientific inquiry. Then we can say that what the intellect defines as disordered is actually a negation of its interest and an affirmation of something else, a different kind of “order” indeed.

To give a brief example, even the question of existence which is often worded as “Why there is something rather than nothing?” is related to aforementioned demands of the intellect. It presupposes non-existence has a priority over existence; existence is conceptualized as an addition of something to nothing. For Bergson, this is an error. Existence is experienced whereas nonexistence can only be conceptualized. Therefore, non-existence actually consists in something more than existence. First, there is the experience of existence; then, an operation of the intellect is added to this experience to produce the abstract concept of non-existence.

This is why the idea of disorder is just a “pseudo-idea” for Bergson, “disorder for the intellect” would be a much appropriate choice of term. Again, we can constrain our understanding of the concept “order” to a narrow meaning; or rather than a hypothetical

superposition of order upon “disorder” whose supposition cannot be based on anything else than the intellect’s needs, we can come to an understanding that the reality should be thought as consisting in more than one order. These orders are named as geometrical and vital orders by Bergson. This perspective overcomes the pseudo-idea of disorder. The geometrical order is characterized by material relations and this means inertia and automatism are essential qualities of it. These qualities make this order conceivable for the intellect, hence scientific inquiry is an efficient method on this domain; we can say that it is “the order” for science. On the other hand, life and facts related to it (such as evolution) belong to the vital order, the very opposite of the geometrical order. What the vital order has as its essentials, viz. novelty and indeterminateness, are interpreted as disorderly in terms of the intellect. In reality, the intellect simply fails to impose its forms and find what it seeks in this order. Philosophy, free from the burdens of science, can recognize the vital order.

As is known, science functions with the aim of producing practical general laws, it can only fulfill its duty when it does so. This is in order to help humankind to act and reap benefits from its environment. This utilitarian perspective, to some extent, has already become ingrained in humans. Because, as we have explained above, its evolutionary path has left humankind with the intellect being the dominant faculty of reason. Thus, the intellect and its application science do not stop in the domain they excel. While unceasingly trying to extract what they seek in their interaction from the vital order, they expose it to same treatment which they also expose matter. “Like produces like,” this motto is sought by the intellect also in the vital order which is creative, ignoring the fact that it is not a domain which is subjected to determinism like the geometrical order. Therefore, it can easily be understood why scientific perspective is unfitting to grasp life’s essential qualities; it is forced upon them nonetheless. For the sake of satisfying intellectual needs, living beings (with their potential to create novelty disregarded) and the creative activity of life are put under general laws; while this process, in its essence, is just trying to transform the vital order into groups of interested repetitions which scientific utility can be obtained. This is why conclude that different orders of being require different epistemological approaches.

The metaphysics of life is one of constant flux. The vital order is related to time, and unfolding of time is where creation occurs. It should not be forgotten that the time is a flow; it is not a sum of discontinuities which have definite beginnings and endings. Therefore, as creation we understand it occurs in time, it does not consist in occurrences where distinct forms erupt in a determined fashion from their prior and binding conditions. Any movement

of what is vital do not share the nature of matter, which is characterized by the externality of its parts. Unlike it, the movement that is life is an interpenetrating multiplicity without clean cut divisions. Where we lack definite discontinuities following each other sequentially, it is inconsequential to talk about determining causal relationships between them. In fact, for Bergson, absolute distinctions are only available in pure geometry which is an abstraction. In reality, everything is in interaction with other things to some extent. With respect to this, absolute and pure unity is also an abstraction for Bergson, he argues that it can only correspond to a mathematical point. Overall, once again we should point out the Kantian reason's inadequacy. Categories of understanding such as unity, plurality, and causality are not imposable onto what is of vital order unless we are content with a mere representation of it.

To sum it up, if metaphysics of life is treated with concepts that are given by the intellect, if it is burdened with science's utilitarian expectations, then an imprint of relativity is inescapably left upon it. The domain of inert matter and its geometric properties are where sciences such as physics reign, but scientific method used in positive sciences become distorting in the sciences of life, e.g. biology and psychology. Philosophy can provide the necessary perspective for the sciences of life: "The duty of philosophy should be to intervene here actively, to examine the living without any reservation as to practical utility, by freeing itself from forms and habits that are strictly intellectual."<sup>1</sup> Science's dissatisfaction in theoretical knowledge and its habit of branding what it cannot use as disorder can be understood; its interests simply do not lie in such knowledge. But the philosophy, as it is without any commitment to utilitarian obligations, should not constrain itself to the domain of practice.

### 3.2. The Time, Creation and Contingency

Before starting to explain the other faculty of reason, viz. intuition, in order to appreciate intuition's importance, we should be able to understand the philosophical framework which Bergson created. To put it briefly, intuition is necessary in order to understand dynamic/temporal aspects of reality and it is the method that Bergson believes

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 215.

should be recommended to any philosopher which seeks to grasp reality impartially and as a whole. Since to interact with reality, one must delve “into it” via the intuition.<sup>1</sup> This is the only way how a philosopher is able to focus on his metaphysical studies without being held back by the practical demands of the intellect and by being constrained to partiality science imposes.

In the philosophical framework of Bergson, time is essential. Because, in his philosophy of becoming, time equals to reality while space is a translation of reality. This is why a philosopher must struggle to grasp it, he must do so as the philosopher is a seeker of the truth. Intuition steps in at this point as the designated tool of the philosopher. For during this search metaphysics should ensure that the understanding of time is not affected by the assertive need of utility, it should ignore the practical necessities of the intellect. The epistemological difference between the faculties of intuition and the intellect, and naturally their respective methods, might be explained by underlining a contrast in their conception of time. Science depends on aforementioned biases when it deals with time and hence exposes it to geometrical/mathematical treatment. In an article of Vaughan, a paragraph explains Bergson’s conceptualization of “mathematical treatment” distinctly;

It is telling that for Bergson, mathematics does not only pertain to measurement (although numerical knowledge is of course the paradigm of mathematical knowledge), but also to the way in which knowledge is apprehended in experience – in this case through a superposition of one part on another. In his 1935-36 lecture course “Basic Questions of Metaphysics”, Martin Heidegger provides an analysis of the etymological origins of mathematics (*mathesis*), emphasizing that the term has broader connotations than strictly numerical measurement and calculation. In terms that complement Bergson’s, Heidegger shows how mathematics pertains to our experience of things generally, being a mode of knowledge in which we apprehend about things only what we are already predisposed to know them to be in advance. It is the essence of the mathematical view of things to filter out of every new experience those aspects that are irreducible to the already known. In Bergson’s metaphysics this means to filter out the real creative action of time and know it only through a schematic superposition of parts.<sup>2</sup>

What mathematical treatment of time gives us to is the spatialized time. And this result is ideal for science, since science always tries to reach mathematical precision as mathematical precision is its peak. It strives to be able to represent reality in universal and fixed formulas which are convenient for obtaining practical benefits. However, attempting to reestablish time via a mathematical language ends up in recreating time as a sum of multiple and distinct intervals which ignore its continuity, an essential quality of it. We have mentioned before, indivisibility and interpenetration are essential qualities of time while discontinuity and externality are what characterizes inert matter. Therefore, superposition of a time interval

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*. (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Vaughan, “Henri Bergson’s ‘Creative Evolution’,” 12-13.

(such as a moment) to a former one cannot reflect the continuous time, the time as it is, but it creates an illusion. Thus, an illusion is created in which a virtual division is introduced, and the continuity is translated into fixity;

Ever since my university days I had been aware that duration is measured by the trajectory of a body in motion and that mathematical time is a line; but I had not yet observed that this operation contrasts radically with all other processes of measurement, for it is not carried out on an aspect or an effect representative of what one wishes to measure, but on something which excludes it. The line one measures is immobile, time is mobility. The line is made, it is complete; time is what is happening, and more than that, it is what causes everything to happen.<sup>1</sup>

*Duration*, which is the real time for Bergson, loses its essence when expressed in spatial terms, e.g. time represented as a line in mathematics. It is useless to try representing a movement or a change (which always take place in time) by a fixed line (which is not temporal but spatial) without losing its fundamental characteristics. How can it be so when movement is the exact opposite of fixity? What we can achieve at most by this spatial representation is a sum of fixed positions marked out on a line which neglects the inherent nature of a continuity, and a practical but approximated representation of the effects of time. This time is called the *measured time*, and it is opposed to the concept of duration (*la durée*), which Bergson also calls as the experienced time.

Epistemologically, measuring the time or trying to grasp it as it is makes an essential difference. Time reveals itself, as duration, when we stop trying to measure but instead experience it. What we mean by the word experience is shifting our perspective towards the experienced inner life, being able to focus on the continuity of our consciousness as a flux. The dominant associationist perspective of psychologists which erringly divides consciousness into conscious states is a mediated imposition of determinism into the vital domain<sup>2</sup>. This intellectualist and virtual division makes the prior conscious state the determiner of the following one, just as the same approach makes a time interval the determiner of the following one in mathematical representation of time. At this point, we can understand why the problem of free will has its origins in this misconception too. As Pamela Sue Anderson correctly states, “The ever-popular problem of determinism or libertarianism is, in Bergsonian terms, generated by a method of analysis which results in paradoxes.”<sup>3</sup> It originates when we divide the consciousness which is actually a flux into fixed and external

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay On the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. (New York: Dover Publications, 2001), 155.

<sup>3</sup> Pamela Sue Anderson, “Bergsonian Intuition: A Metaphysics of Mystical Life,” *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 43, No: ½ (2015): 245.

conscious states. This is the same fault we do when we freeze duration and convert it into measured time. By this operation of the intellect, the possibility of novelty in a consciousness vanishes. From this examination we can infer why, as pure duration, the flux of inner life is not suited to be put under the Kantian categories of understanding, it is neither a unity nor a multiplicity.<sup>1</sup> The intellect repeats its practices in every interaction it makes and imposes spatial forms on its objects, in this case psychic life. Spatial qualities are imposed to psychic life; difference is that the quality of externality is termed as “succession” for relating conscious states to temporality rather than using the term “juxtaposition” as this quality is called while in the spatial plane. But, it is spatialization of time nonetheless, and the only thing actually changed is the term used for it. Without any regard to the truth, practical demands triumphed and science deformed its object in another area of study which belongs to the vital domain. It should be seen that science “finds” what it seeks in consciousness; a supposed pattern of causal relations is introduced into the conscious life and certain degree of foreseeability is obtained with such division. This is the way how what science abhors, contingency and unpredictability, are eliminated from inner life.

Postulation of determinism in the material systems is the norm for science. As science confuses and does not distinguish spatialized/measured time from the real time, determinism is also introduced to duration. For science, time is just a medium where “the causes” unfold themselves to reach “the effects,” characterized by externality of its “parts” like space. This postulate about determinism could be more true if inert matter was all that the existence has to offer, pure materiality and spatialized time. But as we know it the material objects of chemistry and physics co-exist with organisms, beings with consciousness that has an inner duration, and they add indeterminateness to the universe. As Bergson opines that; “If we could grasp it (universe) in its entirety, inorganic but interwoven with organic beings, we should see it ceaselessly taking on forms as new, as original, as unforeseeable as our states of consciousness.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore duration, where the creative evolution of the vital occurs, also effects what is material. It makes real creation possible, for which novelty is an essential characteristic. In conclusion, radical determinism does not reign even in material system as long as they are not totally isolated from life.

The genuine creation that duration brings is inherent in reality. And while creation brings novelty, science is unable to do anything more than rearranging existing parts to

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

represent what is new, its *modus operandi* ensures that. So, scientific reduction is unable to fulfill its goal precisely in a plane where real creation occurs and it is destined to fail in its predictions from time to time. For example, the principle of causality is a postulate which science fundamentally depends on, and we can evaluate how this principle is utilized during scientific endeavor. Events take place, observations are made, repetitions are extracted from situations at hand; and in the end, causal links are established. Some occurrences are termed as causes and some as effects, retrospectively. Till time brings novelty in the form of an adequate number of contradictions, which amounts to a number that cannot be ignored, a scientific theory holds its ground and a so called necessary causal link prevails.

We can observe how an intellectualist understanding imposes itself on the scientific endeavor by investigating the terms “the possible” and “the actual.” Daily use mixes the two meanings of the term “possibility.” In one meaning, the scientific understanding of the term, “possibility” suggests that there is the possible and it might become the actual through the unfolding of the principle of causality in time. For Bergson, it is tacitly implying a “transcendental realm of possibilities,” where a possibility does exist before the moment of its actualization. It is an expectation of the mind which is waiting to be satisfied. In such a conceptualization of the term, Bergson suggests, there is no genuine creation involved; it is mistakenly thought that if a superhuman intellect existed, it would be able to detect which option is going to be the actual among “the possibles.” And this determinist perspective of the intellect abhors the idea of genuine creation to such an extent that when the intellect fails in its predictions, it explains the failure by the intellect’s lack of sufficient information about the causes.

Opposed to that, in the other conceptualization of the term “possibility,” the term just limits the meaning to a definition of a situation where there is “no insurmountable barrier to its realization.”<sup>1</sup> It does not allow any pre-actual state of being, even in the form of being a “possible,” as it implies a pre-existence and therefore foreseeability before actualization. For Bergson, the genuine creation creates what is possible and what is actual at the same time; “there is perpetual creation of possibility and not only of reality.”<sup>2</sup> “Truth’s retrograde movement” is pointed by Bergson in these words;

By the sole fact of being accomplished, reality casts its shadow behind it into the indefinitely distant past: it thus seems to have been preexistent to its own realization, in the form of a possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

From this results an error which vitiates our conception of the past; from this arises our claim to anticipate the future on every occasion. We ask ourselves, for example, what the art, the literature, the civilization of tomorrow will be like; we picture approximately the graph of the evolution of societies; we go so far as to predict events in detail.

We can always, to be sure, link up the reality once it is accomplished, to the events which preceded it and to the circumstances in which it occurred; but taken from another angle, an entirely different reality (not just *any* reality, it is true) could just as well be linked up to the same circumstances and events.<sup>1</sup>

This is the course how intellectualism misconceives time and the term possibility, and by this, it misleads science into thinking that it can always predict what is to come from what is at hand. Bergson underlines that contingency prevails in the universe and different causal links might be established depending on different interests, retrospectively. Only after an event occurs that we create the link which binds the past determinately to present. This is eliminating novelty from time; the future cannot be found in its entirety in the present if it provides anything new. However, it is important to note that it would be wrong to attribute him a philosophy which neglects causal relations altogether; he voices his opinion against radical determinism while he openly admits the practical benefits humankind has provided from establishing causal relations which make their presence felt heavily in the domain of inert matter.

Intellectualization of reality, as we have shown, brings its share of problems along with its applications. Time eludes us, so does the creation and the vital domain. This is why Bergson insists on experiencing time and studying metaphysics of life by another mean, another epistemological approach. Let us repeat a fundamental argument again: Metaphysics cannot be served by the tools which sciences use.

### 3.3. The Need of A New Approach to Metaphysics

Divergent lines of evolution have resulted in different forms of life. Springing from the original source, the vital impetus, life in its various forms has clashed with matter in order to overcome the determinist nature of it. One of these forms has managed this demanding task in a distinguishingly efficient manner. It has culminated in human consciousness and provided itself with innumerable possibilities of action, hence, becoming a genuine reservoir of potentiality. Pearson provides a perspective on this aspect of human consciousness with his

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 22.



own words: “.. with the human animal the life of consciousness reaches its highest state of emancipation from the restricted movement of matter.”<sup>1</sup>

However, the conceptualization of human consciousness and reason have changed during humankind’s history. The glorification of the intellect, and the misconception that this specific faculty of the reason is actually the whole of it overshadows the history of western philosophy. How did the intellect get this privileged place? As the intellect excels in manipulating its environment and acting on inert matter, it has become the dominating faculty of human reason. It is comprehensible for the environment in question consists mainly in matter; “*primum vivere*” as Bergson reminds us, a phrase which states that survival is the primary concern for all life forms, hence the dominance of the intellect throughout the history of humankind. We have explained at length in the first chapter, once philosophy accurately traces back the evolution of the intellect to its beginnings, it realizes that it has not evolved with the purpose “to look at passing shadows nor yet to turn itself round and contemplate the glaring sun,”<sup>2</sup> as Bergson refers to Plato’s allegory of the cave. It simply favors practical necessities and action.

But one might ask, even if we reach the conclusion that ontologically there is more to the reason than the intellect, that metaphysics is not served well by the intellect and speculation demands something else; how is going beyond the intellect can even be possible when the boundaries of human consciousness has been set by the intellect itself? And possibly the question of “what can be beyond it?” would follow. Epistemologically, limits set by the intellect cannot be overcome by thought, true, as thought is determined by the intellect. We agree with the idea that the attempt will always end in a vicious circle. The intellect might speculate on itself endlessly, yet it cannot transcend its boundaries. What it might reach at best will not be a different kind of method, but achieving just a more complex variation of its analytic methods. Before giving Bergson’s analogical instruction on how to go beyond the intellect, we should remind our argument that during its evolution the humankind was stripped off from an aspect of its consciousness. To be more exact, first the intellect’s dominance was established because of its mastery over the material environment, then the other aspect of human consciousness got dull and forgotten.

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<sup>1</sup> Pearson, “, Bergson's Encounter with Biology,” 2.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 209-210.

In the first section of our thesis which has focused on Bergson's interpretations of different theories of evolution, we have tried to explain his arguments with his empirical examples from the history of evolution. And we have tried to explain how he concluded that the vital impetus, which is the origin of all life including humankind's, provided two forms of consciousness. These forms are instinct and the intellect. The gap between them has widened as time unfolded, true. However, it is still a fact that both faculties of instinct and the intellect do not exist in their pure states in any form of life, they are mixed in different proportions in different species. This is why along with animals, the human being also has the faculty of instinct too; albeit humankind's reason is dominated by the intellect because of the aforementioned reasons. In any case, Bergson propounds that humankind has instinct alongside the intellect, and this psychic foundation provides humans the potential to reflect on instinct via the intellect. This reflection creates the possibility of the intuition, in other words, to what is beyond the intellect.

When we will inquire the method of intuition extensively in the next chapter, it will be seen that "inveterate habits of the mind" make the process of analyzing it arduous. Unfortunately, it is also hard to prescribe the instructions on how to reach this method, this process of reflection, for it resembles a feeling (and commonly mistaken for it) much more than it resembles a thought; it is hard to verbalize. However, Bergson makes an analogy with the act of swimming to illustrate the possibility of this process;

If we had never seen a man swim, we might say that the swimming is an impossible thing, inasmuch as, to learn to swim, we must begin by holding ourselves up in the water and, consequently, already know how to swim. Reasoning, in fact, always nails us down to the solid ground. But if, quite simply, I throw myself into the water without fear, I may keep myself up well enough at first by merely struggling, and gradually adapt myself to the new environment: I shall thus have learnt to swim.<sup>1</sup>

He furthers his argument and says as we cannot derive swimming from the act of walking, but see their connection only after the act has been done and in retrospect, this is how the same connection can be observed between the intellect and what is beyond it.

Taking this "leap" has the utmost importance for philosophy. Otherwise, the intellect's blindness to its epistemological mistakes will result in compromising knowledge's precision at best or making metaphysics totally futile as Kant has argued at worst. Bergsonian philosophy has an emphasis on the need of thinking beyond "the human condition,"<sup>2</sup> which is

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 211.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Ansell Pearson, *Bergson: Thinking Beyond the Human Condition*. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018)

a reference to radical intellectualism. It reiterates the need that the intellect should be dethroned from its high ground as the sole faculty of reason. The intellect is not the designated faculty for studying the whole of reality; this kind of metaphysical pursuits demand more than relative knowledge born out of practical necessities. By the intuitive approach, metaphysics will be able to fulfill its duty. It will stop relying on fixed concepts of the intellect; as a result, relative knowledge which has only practical importance will be abandoned. The temporal perspective that intuition provides will enable grasping duration as a continuum in contrast to intellect's tendency to grasp it as a translation which consists in a sum of spatialized intervals, thus promising the possibility of absolute knowledge again. By this novel understanding, the emancipation of metaphysics, especially the metaphysics of life, can be realized.

### 3.4. Intuition

*Philosophie nouvelle*, as it has been called what Bergson puts forth is nothing less than a new approach to metaphysics. And the prescribed faculty for this "leap" is the faculty of intuition. Intuition is a fundamental concept in his philosophy and Bergson felt the need to differentiate his key faculty and its method from other concepts which some philosophers also named as such. He did rightly so, the term has been used plentifully in the history of philosophy and it has conveyed different meanings when used by different philosophers. While this is the situation with the term, one can easily fail to see what is novel in the Bergsonian concept of intuition. For example, in his article of *Bergson's Doctrine of Intuition*, Cunningham provides an example to this. He strongly disagrees with the claims that Bergsonian intuition is a novel concept and he strongly denies that it delivers a new method to metaphysics, arguing that the doctrine "has been taught in one form or another at least since the days of Plato."<sup>1</sup> As far as we understand, his arguments on this subject are backed by a false supposition which oversimplifies intuition to "intelligence in the sense in which intelligence is the method of 'knowing' which leads beyond the point of view of the Kantian *Verstand* (Understanding).<sup>2</sup> Another interpretation has been made by Anderson who also denies a radical difference from Kantian intuition, but rather than refuting all its originality,

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<sup>1</sup> G. Watts Cunningham, "Bergson's Doctrine of Intuition," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 33, No. 6 (1924): 604.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 606.

she interprets Bergsonian intuition as a transformation of the former concept which is not limited to sensibility<sup>1</sup> and with the differentiating attempt to achieve a non-perspectival or absolute knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, to avoid the confusion which the redundant usage of the term creates, it is a necessity to clarify Bergsonian intuition's differences from other concepts which share the same name.

First, Bergson clearly states that it would be wrong to think that his understanding of intuition is a search for the eternal, as it is the case with Schopenhauer and Schelling<sup>3</sup>. Bergsonian intuition is not after an abstract and fixed concept such as eternity. What his method searches is a flux or change, something with a temporal aspect, so a philosopher should not neglect this essential fact. Actually, Bergson criticizes other philosophers for misconceiving what the intuition is as they base their conception of intuition on their mistaken ontological pretenses. When philosophers seek eternal truths which do not change, and when they suppose that the faculty of intellect deals in time (e.g. the Kantian form of intuition), then they necessarily affiliate intuition with *sub specie aeternitatis*, and they conceptualize it as a faculty outside of time. Hence, logical steps are taken from a false start. They fail to see what we have argued for in detail, that in reality the intellect is in no way related to time, but to space. It first translates duration into a form based on its interests, then it operates in a spatialized and practical representation of time. The intellect does not function with time, on the contrary, it actually eliminates real time or duration from its operations in order to extract interested repetitions. Thus, the misconception of the intellect tacitly leaves intuition with a negative definition, being what the intellect is not. Intuition is conceptualized so, for where the intellect is constrained by time, intuition does not; where the intellect fails at grasping what is eternal, some other faculty should not. This confusion poses a serious problem for metaphysics. Bergson defines the situation as the limitation of intuition by the intellect, and intuition which is understood as such and which is in search of the eternal, also distorts its objects into generalizations and leads to a vague metaphysics without any real contribution to knowledge;

For the concepts which the intelligence furnishes, the intuition simply substitutes one single concept which includes them all and which consequently is always the same, by whatever name it is called: Substance, Ego, Idea, Will. Philosophy, thus understood, necessarily pantheistic, will have no difficulty in explaining everything deductively, since it will have been given beforehand, in a principle which is the concept of concepts, all the real and all the possible. But this

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, "Bergsonian Intuition: A Metaphysics," 246.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>3</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 33.

explanation will be vague and hypothetical, this unity will be artificial, and this philosophy would apply equally well to a very different world from our own.<sup>1</sup>

When philosophers ignore the fact that reality comprises of change, in vain they try to explain it by using eternal concepts which exclude time and change. This leads them to begin looking for a concept similar to the hypothetical “theory of everything,” a theory which explains all phenomena, and which in its origins is based on the practical demands of scientists. Then, philosophers give up their attempts to understand reality and instead focus their efforts to produce an all-explaining concept. Quite the contrary, what they should be doing is the opposite; they should be doing metaphysics and studying reality by taking its temporal and dynamic aspects into consideration. Influence of time, the change and novelty it brings should be recognized. If not, the sincere ideal of the search for truth gets brushed aside for the sake of generalizations that satisfies the intellect’s demands.

When intuition relieves metaphysics from the limitation of intellect’s concepts, reality reveals its dynamic aspects to mind. What is revealed is the flux of time; not as a juxtaposition of intervals which is measured time (or intellectualized time), but as a succession of interpenetrating qualities, as an organic whole. Therefore it can be said that intuition acts with synthetic tendencies and it is characterized by its opposition to the intellect’s analytical approach. By the unceasing movement of the past towards the future, time is indivisible in itself. This realization can only be achieved by the intuition. Let’s assume that humankind lacked intuition, therefore unable to grasp time as a flux. As we replace the flux experienced by intuition with a sum of discontinuous time frames (which would imply, however briefly, that existence ceases to be perpetually between these definite intervals) perceived by the intellect, the concept of the past becomes illogical; for we would have negated the past’s connection to the present. Measured time, which actually is a misrepresentation of time with spatial qualities imposed on it, leaves its place to duration with the intuitive method; thus the domain of speculation is cleansed from practical/spatial representations.

The intuition, as it is a “direct” way of obtaining knowledge in contrast to the relative perspective of the intellect, is the prescribed faculty for the study of metaphysics. Bergson realizes the importance of intuition first when he tries to grasp the temporal qualities of the flux of consciousness; then, as he designates change as the essential quality of whole reality, he extends his intuitive approach into other aspects of his metaphysical studies. He makes an

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 33-34.

analogy between the intuition and the feeling of sympathy; for him, they both have a similarity in their inwardness and immediacy. Intuition lets us grasp what is essential in things. This is another place to remind why and how metaphysics should distinguish itself from the perspectival inquiry of the scientific method. Metaphysics of life can also be reduced to physico-chemical relations as an object of knowledge, and then, science might be able to inquire into life. But a mediated approach of this kind, which first ignores time and exempts change (as the intellect's findings are rearrangements of what is already at hand) from its explanations rather than grasping life "from within," cannot be the foundation of a creditable metaphysics. When it is tried anyhow, it provides just a "frame of an object taken from outside," a mediated and relative perspective which has the goal to explain rather than to understand; while the intuition, as we have said, is characterized by its "inwardness" and grasping what is essential in life.

Unfortunately, the intuition, which Bergson proposes as the faculty to be the foundation of metaphysics, is really difficult to analyze into intellectual terms. Words are inadequate in sketching what is durational; "Let no one ask me for a simple and geometrical definition of intuition" he says, and adds:

Of what is not abstract and conventional but real and concrete, and all the more so of what is not reconstituable with known components, in other words, of that thing which has not been cut out of the whole of reality either by the understanding or by common sense or by language, one cannot give any idea unless one takes views of it that are multiple, complementary and not at all equivalent.<sup>1</sup>

This is why his books are full of metaphors and analogies. This "philosophical mind" has the simplicity of an experience on one hand and complexity of trying to define the same experience on the other. Nonetheless, we can try to open up this obscure concept by trying to point the qualities which separates it from the intellect and its method. Bergson makes a simple but also profound statement about the intuition by saying that it is characterized by "thinking in duration." We should always keep in mind that the intellect is blind to duration. While the intellect derives real time from the summation of immobilities, for intuition immobility is just a static frame picked from the movement itself; fixity is to the intellect what change is to intuition, viz. ontologically prior. Another difference in epistemological aspect reveals itself during an inquiry of a concept; we can derive two different meanings from the concept of "novelty." What is novel for the intellect is just a process of rearrangement of already existing parts; this way it explains what is unknown in terms of what is known. But,

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<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 37.

only genuine creation deserves to be called as novel for the intuition. More or less, this is how we can approach to the intellectual limit of achieving a description for the intuition. Although we can try to define it negatively, distinguish it from the intellect by its opposite qualities, strive to define it by referring to its relation to duration, or better yet as Bergson suggests by inventing new categories such as heterogeneous multiplicity; as the definition process would necessarily be a verbal one, the process in question would always take place via static concepts. Therefore, the definition will always be a well chosen analogy at best. The faculty of intuition is beyond language, only the experience of it can do justice to itself. Anderson emphasizes this aspect also for the object of the faculty, by saying that, "Bergsonian intuition of what is unique and inexpressible in life inevitably renders intuition mystical."<sup>1</sup>

This is why most philosophers have generally chosen to ignore intuition and conceptualize reason as consisting only in the "clarity" of intellect. What cannot be intellectualized via language is discarded by an accusation of obscurity. While Bergson proposes that his method of intuition grasps the absolute; in his article on Bergson's intuition, Bruno Jordan says "... the mere possession of the truth is worthless so long as it is not known that it has roots in well-grounded associations,"<sup>2</sup> in which he implies that even the concept of truth becomes irrelevant unless an epistemological method can offer justifications for the knowledge it provides. We strongly disagree with this argument. It is true that Bergson does not find the method's justification in its potential to be intellectualized, in other words, its potential to be transformed into concepts; he neither values a knowledge in proportion to its practical relativity (which is measured by its capacity to satisfy utilitarian demands via providing causal links for generalizations). However, the justification and the value of the method lie in its *sui generis* experience; relational criteria are ignored in order to be able to grasp an object in its essence and uniqueness. If pre-existing concepts are inadequate in corresponding to a specific experience and a pre-existing criterion is unattainable, then a forced attempt to translate the experience into a suitable form is not what a philosophical method should do. Formal expression can neither take place of what is essential, nor it can determine a knowledge's worth.

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, "Bergsonian Intuition: A Metaphysics," 242.

<sup>2</sup> Bruno Jordan, "Kant and Bergson," *The Monist*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1912): 409.

### 3.5. The New Metaphysics

The misinterpretation of Bergsonian philosophy went to such an extent that Russell categorized it as a continuation of an anti-rationalist movement that had its beginnings in Rousseau<sup>1</sup> and labeled it as an “action against the authority of Greece, and more particularly of Plato.”<sup>2</sup> While we agree with the idea that Bergsonian philosophy contrasts Plato’s philosophy in most aspects, we strongly disagree with the classification that relates him to irrationalist/anti-rationalist movements. Bergson assigns the intuitive method as the only proper way of practicing metaphysics, but he has a distinguishing meaning for the concept, he ontologically locates intuition as a faculty of the reason and he also limits its excellence to the domain of metaphysics, he does not neglect the intellect and its functions. This is why it must insistently be repeated against ongoing misconceptions that he is not an anti-rationalist but an anti-intellectualist. In its core, his main argument on this topic is that it is wrong to ignore intuition’s place in epistemology for purposes of glorifying the intellect, a fraction which also forms a bias and unwarranted hierarchy between metaphysics and science. It is clearly stated in his writings that while the intellect necessary relativizes its objects to his categories, objects (especially physical bodies) related to human action are well suited for such practical treatment; the intellect provides an excellent contribution to humankind in terms of daily activities. How can it not be, after all, it is the “artificial organ” which has evolved to do so;

Our intelligence is the prolongation of our senses. Before we speculate we must live, and life demands that we make use of matter, either with our organs, which are natural tools, or with tools, properly so-called, which are artificial organs. Long before there was a philosophy and a science, the role of the intelligence was already that of manufacturing instruments and guiding the action of our body on surrounding bodies. Science has pushed this labor of the intelligence much further, but has not changed its direction. It aims above all at making us masters of matter. Even when science is speculating, it is still devoting its attention to acting...<sup>3</sup>

And this is why we should not mix the aforementioned epistemological methods and areas of study. Matter, relation of bodies to other bodies to be more precise, should be left to sciences; while metaphysics should focus on its own domain that which is temporal, such as the human mind.<sup>4</sup> In the end, with an open mind, the human reason will be able to grasp both aspects of reality via these two complementary areas of study.

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<sup>1</sup> Russell, *The History of Western*, 791

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 792.

<sup>3</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Sometimes, Bergson uses the term spirit instead of mind. This practice indicates two things: the mystic tendencies of the philosopher and the implication of an inner duration.



To achieve this clarity, the purpose of metaphysics should be defined. Being only able to explain an aspect of reality, metaphysics should have precise boundaries and a definite method; it should focus on attaining an absolute comprehension only in its domain of knowledge. By this we mean, ending its search of “totality of things.” The decision is necessary if metaphysics wants to have a precision (not practicality) comparable to science. During metaphysics’ process of attaining precision, having the liberty of creating new concepts has the utmost importance. Pre-determined verbal entities should not be a limiting factor to a study which hopes to provide new knowledge as an area of study. This “new metaphysics” as Bergson names it, needs to be based on experience rather than pre-existing abstract concepts, and it should “dispense with symbols” which are practical translations.<sup>1</sup> For example, some classic concepts which have procured fundamental importance in metaphysics, and in being so which have been used amply to construct systems, have caused the theories which included them to turn into barren metaphysics. In other words, this approach to metaphysics have become an exploitative attempt to overcome the dependence of knowledge upon experience and base our knowledge on pure concepts.

Bergson gives an example to clarify the difference in methods between the two metaphysics, as it has been done and the metaphysics which he recommends; the example is the question of soul's survival of the body. In the first method, we can say the one which has become the tradition, he shows how metaphysical reasoning can work via pure concepts. As a good example, Plato’s philosophy to answer the question at hand is given. The Platonic form, in which attributes of being simple and unchangeable are articulated with the concept of soul, is provided; whence we can deduce that the soul is eternal, and it logically follows that it is immortal. But this deduction only works when we accept the Platonic definition of the concept. This knowledge does not go beyond being just a probability for us, because the proposition’s truth conditions are the concept's definition and these conditions are transcendental.

Alternatively, we can investigate the body-mind relation by making use of experience rather than pure concepts. As it is exemplified best in Bergson's works which benefits from his empirical studies in biology, observations can provide reliable foundations for metaphysics too. Bergson argues that the body, or the brain, is not the progenitor of the consciousness; it is an appendage to optimize the action at hand by selecting and bringing

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1912), 9.

specific memories which are related to current action from the accumulated duration of the consciousness (the memory as a whole).<sup>1</sup> The brain just gives precision to the consciousness for producing optimal action, as it is the organ of *attention to life*. This classic question of philosophy is not fundamentally related with the point we are trying to express, therefore to delve into Bergson's encompassing studies on body-mind relation in detail would be uncalled for. However, a further note on Bergson's example which is the medical case called "aphasia" can be provided in order to clarify his interpretation of body-mind relation. He propounds that this pathologic situation, which is diagnosed by damages in parts of the brain and characterized by a deficiency in using communicative skills, does not consist in memories or skills being totally lost as a result of tissue damage, although it seems to be the case at first. This misconception brings to mind the wrong image of brain "housing" the consciousness. Aphasia consists much more in an inability of recalling related memories (and skills) from our accumulated duration (memory as a whole) rather than their total annihilation by the damage in cerebral tissues. When the brain is unable to perform its principal function because of the damage, it becomes incapable of bringing back a specific portion of the past or related memories to consciousness. How did Bergson come to this conclusion? He made an inference based on empiric evidence: If the brain was actually the progenitor of memories rather than the organ responsible of recalling them, a patient diagnosed with aphasia would lose their ability to communicate forever with the dead material tissue; whereas the accumulated findings suggest otherwise, "an effort, an emotion, can bring suddenly to consciousness words believed definitely lost."<sup>2</sup>

Nature has invented a mechanism for canalizing our attention in the direction of the future, in order to turn it away from the past - I mean of that part of our history which does not concern our present actions,- in order to bring to it at most, in the form of "memories," one simplification or another of anterior experience, destined to complete the experience of the moment; it is in this that the function of the brain consists.<sup>3</sup>

Epiphenomenalism is thus rejected. With observations provided from biology, we are able to establish an empirical relation between soul/mind and body/brain. Therefore, we can base the proposition that "the soul outlives the body" on experience rather than simple reasoning, which is always the case when we are dealing in traditional metaphysics.

It is true that the Bergsonian method in metaphysics has its constraints and dominant habits of thought should be overcome in order to internalize it. Russell comments on this

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*. (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 27, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 181.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

aspect; he asserts that it is neither empirical nor a priori, and concludes “An attempt to classify Bergson’s philosophy in either of these ways is hardly likely to be successful, since it cuts across all the recognized divisions.”<sup>1</sup> We think that it is an inaccurate inference, as we have given applied examples above, Bergson designates the intuitive experience as its method. And, when the metaphysics acknowledges the necessity of experience, two results emerge: the rate of accumulating knowledge decreases dramatically compared to the deductive method and the necessity of experience limits metaphysical inquiries in terms of their scope. The ability to form ideal relations by simple reasoning is lost, of which is a characteristic of deductive method. Nonetheless, what it lacks in scope and being definitive, it makes up in “pushing strong roots down into the real.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, although this method is experience dependent and able to provide limited amounts of knowledge rather than being able to provide all-explaining systems, it gives an absolute answer to its specific object in exchange for these deficiencies.<sup>3</sup> Bergson calls this form of metaphysics as the “true empiricism,”<sup>4</sup> and he clearly states that this is how the metaphysics can redeem itself and become a reliable source of knowledge, “akin to that of science”<sup>5</sup> but in its own domain of knowledge. The other option for metaphysics is, as we have pointed out many times, remaining an area of study which can only create illusions of being informative; this is so by getting support from *deus ex machina* concepts, from which every other possible concept can be deduced, such as the theological term God;

Things being brought back to their concepts, the concepts fitting into one another, one finally arrives at an idea of ideas, by which one imagines that everything is explained. Truth to tell, it does not explain very much, first because it accepts the subdivision and the distribution of the real into concepts which society has deposited in language and which it had most often brought about for the sake of convenience; and in the second place because the synthesis it makes of these concepts is empty of matter and purely verbal. ...no matter what name you give to the “thing itself”, whether you make of it the Substance of Spinoza, the Ego of Fichte, the Absolute of Schelling, the Idea of Hegel, or the Will of Schopenhauer, it will be useless for the word to present itself with its well-defined signification: it will lose it; it will be emptied of all meaning from the moment it is applied to the totality of things.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the illusion of being explanatory is created.

The task of the metaphysician should be to realize the origins of these concepts, to inquire into their “purity.” When this happens, it will be understood that they exist to perform a function. Concepts are fabricated verbal entities which are used for grouping different things

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<sup>1</sup> Russell, *The History of Western*, 791.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 52.

<sup>3</sup> (Vaughan, “Henri Bergson’s ‘Creative Evolution’,” 10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 36.

<sup>5</sup> Vaughan, “Henri Bergson’s ‘Creative Evolution’,” 10.

<sup>6</sup> (Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 54-55.

within them, a clearly practical origin; the intellect produces them to signify generalities. "Primum vivere," this is how Bergson reminds us that the intellect works to satisfy the practical necessities of life as its priority; generalizing is an essential necessity both in action and in social interaction. Therefore, making pure concepts the foundation of metaphysics is a devastating act if we want metaphysics to retain its unbiased speculative aspect. It should be recognized that these fixed concepts, which are practical and created for social utility, carve up reality in ways according to their interests. This is the socialization of truth, or in other words, coercing the knowledge into forms which have been pre-formed to satisfy existing practices of life. Unless the intuitive way which is free from the dependence on pre-existing concepts is introduced to metaphysics, the pseudo-problems of philosophy which we have argued in the section "Two Kinds of Order" devalues its endeavor. For example, we have argued in there that how the idea of disorder is actually modeled on a situation where the intellect fails to find what it seeks, and that it is actually not a lack of an order but an order of a different kind, different from what the intellect's existing concept of "order" signifies.

What we want to underline by reminding this example is, that Bergson wants to restore metaphysics to its deserved place by clarifying the origins of the concepts we use to study it. The restoration of metaphysics requires it to overcome practical relativism. It needs to provide absolute knowledge in its domain, just as the science does in its. And we have tried to explain how this is possible, by inventing new concepts that match reality rather than trying to force reality into already existing ones. Experience, not words, can establish a reliable foundation for metaphysics. For this, metaphysics should be more intuitive; it should be able to grasp duration, to accept change rather than overcoming it by the intellect's ad hoc explanations. It is true that the intellect will be rebelling against its most inveterate habits during this process because it has become the dominant faculty of reason. But then, it can be seen that in no way its tendencies of translating movement into static frames will be enough; in no way its product the fabricated language, which even in its structure gives priority to fixity by postulating an enduring and unchanging substance (subject) that is articulated with different qualities, will be enough to express real change. Therefore metaphysics should redeem itself from intellectualization, and by becoming a precise enterprise via intuition, it can undertake a complementary role to science in accumulating knowledge. And that is how philosophy and science, life and matter, dynamic and static aspects of reality will reveal themselves to human knowledge in their entirety.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have tried to show how the theory of knowledge relates to the theory of life in Bergsonian philosophy, and I have tried to show it mainly by focusing on three main points.

The first point I argued for was that the intellect, the glorified epistemological faculty of humankind in the contemporary world, is not a universal a priori capacity which has remained unchanged from the first glimmers of consciousness till now. In relation to that, I emphasized that in the Bergsonian philosophy, the evolution of humankind (therefore also its cognitive structure) is radically different from how it is conceptualized in the Darwinian conception of evolution, which is still the dominant theory. We have also noted that, apart from the determinist/Darwinian approach, the teleological accounts of evolution do not provide a satisfying option either. Supported by empiric evidences Bergson put forth, this context led us to his idea that the life's evolution should be explained in a novel way; and we reached *élan vital*, the term which is created by Bergson to denominate a novel approach in the metaphysics of life. This vital impetus emerged as an answer to the question of how life diverged into different life forms and how these life forms have different tendencies with the same objective, the objective being clashing with matter's deterministic nature. This characteristic is the underlying unity of all forms of life, and the evolution of the intellect is directly related to this objective.

My second objective was to show that Bergson rejected the modern conceptualization of reason, and the Bergsonian reason differed from it in radical ways. I articulated how the concept of reason has been reduced to one of its faculties, viz. the intellect. And I examined how the intellect's standards of objectivity have been established, and how its capacity to speculate and its domain of knowledge have been misjudged in relation to individual and societal practical needs. The investigation of the evolutionary origins of the intellect revealed its practical tendencies and therefore led us to the idea that the intellect's way of operating makes it an unfitting tool to study temporal aspect of reality. At the end of the second chapter, we have reached to the conclusion that the intellect can only provide practical and formal knowledge, pure speculation being impossible for it.

And in my final chapter, I examined Bergson's conceptualization of reality, how he divided it ontologically and epistemologically into two; these are the geometrical order which can be grasped via the intellect and the vital order which can be grasped via the intuition respectively. His critique of ignoring the vital-dynamic aspect of reality for the sake of practical needs was discussed, and vital order's qualities such as contingency, temporality and dynamism were articulated. Intuition was expounded as the faculty of reason which can grasp the aforementioned qualities. After that, I clarified Bergson's argument on how reducing reality to one of its aspects leads to inadequate intellectual translations and consequently metaphysical impasses. In the end, I have reached the conclusion that conceptualizing reason via reintroducing the intuitive aspect of it might avail us to a new kind of metaphysics.

In the future, it is possible to extend and relate this research into the Bergsonian ethics. As we have investigated the relation between the theory of knowledge and the theory of life, another inquiry into his works which focuses on establishing another link to his ethical philosophy might clarify how the faculty of intuition functions in individual's life and in social space. *Creative Evolution* presents a unique approach to the concept of reason. And, as the concept of reason has a pivotal role in modern moral philosophy, the reconceptualization of reason with the inclusion of the faculty of intuition, will certainly provide new perspectives to the topic. A close reading of *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* might provide the fundamental framework for the task.

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